

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 3-18 are currently pending. Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice; Claim 18 has been added; and Claims 1 and 3-17 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes and additions to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-5, 7, 12, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,956,092 to Ebihara et al. (hereinafter “the ‘092 patent”); Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘092 patent; and Claims 8-11 and 13-16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘092 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,680,747 to Hirose (hereinafter “the ‘747 patent”).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to an image processor for processing a video signal, comprising: (1) aspect ratio information acquisition means for acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal; (2) aspect ratio conversion means for carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed video signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1; (3) background signal generation means for generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed video signal; and (4) video signal combination means for executing a process of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subjected to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal. Further, Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate limitations recited in Claim 2, i.e., that the aspect ratio information acquisition means acquires the aspect ratio information based on identification information that has been

added to the original video signal. Accordingly, the changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

The '092 patent is directed to television receiver including a display having an aspect ratio of 16:9; a picture analysis circuit for analyzing whether or not the picture represented by an incoming video signal has a mask region; an aspect converting circuit for changing an aspect condition of indication of the incoming video signal on the display; and means for activating the picture analysis circuit and controlling the aspect converting circuit to automatically control the aspect condition of indication of the incoming video signal on the display in response to a result of the analysis of the picture analysis circuit, when a button on the remote control transmitter is pressed.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '092 patent fails to disclose aspect ratio information acquisition means for acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal, wherein the aspect ratio information acquisition means acquires the aspect ratio information based on identification information that has been added to the original video signal, as recited in amended Claim 1. Rather, as shown at least in Figures 7-16, the '092 patent discloses that the picture analysis circuit 101 analyzes an incoming video signal to detect whether it has lower and upper mask regions. The '092 patent is silent regarding the identification information that has been added to an original video signal, as recited in Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants note that, regarding the rejection of Claim 2, the Office Action relies upon column 11, lines 61-63 in the '092 patent. However, that section of the '092 patent relates to the remote control transmitter 106 of Figure 2. In particular, the '092 patent discloses that the remote control receiving circuit 105 derives information from the received signal, and outputs the derived information to the remote control analysis microcomputer 104. Further, the '092 patent discloses that the microcomputer 104 decides which of the buttons 106d, 106e, 106f, and 106g, has been depressed and which modes of operation of the

aspect converting circuit 102 is required. Thus, this section of the '092 patent merely describes how the remote control unit transmits an indication of which button was pushed to the remote control receiving circuit. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '092 patent does not disclose an acquisition means that acquires an aspect ratio information based on an identification information that has been added to the original video signal. The '092 patent does not disclose that information has been added to the video signal, but states that through a complicated analysis process, the '092 system is able to figure out whether mask regions exist in the input image and whether the input image includes captions.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 (and all similar rejected dependent claims) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Independent Claims 12 and 17 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 12 and 17 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for reasons analogous to the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 12 and 17 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims.

Regarding the rejection of dependent Claims 6, 8-11, and 13-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 103, Applicants respectfully submit that the '747 patent fails to remedy the deficiencies of the '092 patent, as discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 6, 8-11, and 13-16 are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

The present amendment also sets forth new Claim 18 for examination on the merits. New Claim 18, which depends from Claim 12, clarifies that the identification information is a

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<sup>1</sup> See '092 patent, Figure 12 and the discussion related thereto in the specification.

two-bit code. Claim 18 is supported by the originally filed specification and does not add new matter.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 12, and 17 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '092 and '747 patents.

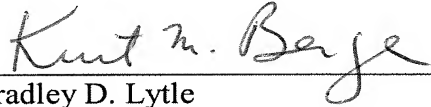
Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,  
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.

Customer Number  
**22850**

Tel: (703) 413-3000  
Fax: (703) 413-2220  
(OSMMN 06/04)

  
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Bradley D. Lytle  
Attorney of Record  
Registration No. 40,073

Kurt M. Berger, Ph.D.  
Registration No. 51,461

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., page 11 of the specification.